STUDENT SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to encourage students to maintain a standard of responsibility for their own self-welfare, and to provide the student with resources to assist in adhering to this standard to promote the student's welfare and the welfare of The University of Texas-Pan American community.

B. Persons Affected

This policy applies to all students.

C. Policy

In the event the University receives a credible report that a student has engaged in acts or threats of suicidal behavior either on- or off-campus the student will be referred to the Dean of Students and may be required to attend sessions for professional assessment to provide the student with resources to adhere to this standard in the future and to monitor the student's willingness and ability to adhere to this standard.

D. Definitions

1. Suicidal Behavior:

    a. Individual alarms and/or disturbs a reasonable observer about his/her intent to kill him/herself (e.g. verbalizes threat and/or engages in behavior that indicates preparation for suicide such as acquiring the means and/or practicing how one would carry though) and/or individual reports significant suicidal ideation (e.g. persisting thoughts, obsessive preoccupation with suicide, or command auditory or visual hallucinations);

    b. Individual takes action that indicates intent of dying by suicide (e.g. some form of attempt).

E. Responsibilities

Not applicable.

F. Procedures

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1. Reporting Suicidal Behavior

   a. Reporting Emergencies

      Any individual who is aware of, or witnesses suicidal behavior, or who has reason to suspect that suicidal behavior is occurring, and that an individual is in imminent danger of suicide should immediately report this concern to the University Police Department.

   b. Reporting Less Immediate Threats

      Any individual who is aware of, or witnesses suicidal behavior, or who has reason to suspect that suicidal behavior is occurring should report this concern to the Office of the Dean of Students by calling the posted referral phone number or completing the on-line referral form.

2. Appointment of Suicidal Behavior Assessment Team (SBAT)

   a. After receiving a report of suicidal behavior (other than imminent), The Dean of Students will conduct a preliminary review which may include meeting with the reporting individual to obtain additional information.

   b. When the information provided to the Dean of Students suggests suicidal behavior, the Dean of Students will appoint a team consisting of a minimum of two licensed mental health professionals and the Dean of Students or his/her designee to review the report to determine whether mandatory assessment will be required.

3. Suicidal Behavior Assessment Team (SBAT) Review and Recommendation

   a. The SBAT mental health professionals will determine if the reported behavior crosses a threshold that constitutes suicidal behavior (see Definitions subsection of this policy). If it does not, the case is "deactivated." A unanimous decision by the mental health professionals on the team is required to deactivate the case. If the reported behavior does cross the threshold of suicidal behavior, the SBAT will inform the Dean of Students or his/her designee.

   b. The SBAT will make an individualized assessment based on the information that is available.

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4. Dean of Students Issued Requirement to Attend Sessions for Professional Assessment

   a. Upon receipt of such a determination from the SBAT, the Dean of Students will contact the student, inform him or her of the standard for self-welfare as set forth in this policy and issue a directive to the student to attend four assessment sessions. Students may choose to go to the University's Counseling and Psychological Services or to an outside licensed mental health professional to satisfy this requirement. The student is responsible for any expenses he or she incurs satisfying this requirement if he or she utilizes services or resources not provided by the University. The student is responsible for scheduling the first appointment for the mandated assessment within seven calendar days from the Dean's directive. It is expected that the remaining three sessions will occur approximately weekly following the initial session or as determined by the assigned therapist. Students will be requested to sign an authorization for release of information to allow communications between the mental health professional and the Dean of Students to ensure the student's attendance at each session and that the student is able to meet the required standard of care.

   b. If the student fails to comply with the requirements of this policy including refusing to attend mandated assessments or failure to adhere to this standard of self-welfare, the Dean of Students will follow up with the student. If not resolved, the student will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with The University of Texas-Pan American *Handbook of Operating Procedures* (*HOP*) Sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2.

5. Appeal

   a. A student may appeal the accuracy of the report of suicidal behavior to the SBAT. In some instances, in order for the appeal to go forward, a student will be required to sign a release of information authorizing the members of the SBAT to contact and interview witnesses to the incident. If the SBAT upholds its decision after review of additional information provided in the appeal, the decision is not subject to further appeal.

   b. The policy of four sessions of professional assessment is applied uniformly to all students who cross the threshold described above. The requirement of four professional assessments is not subject to appeal.

6. False Reports

Any person who knowingly files or participates in a false report under this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.

7. Documentation

Records kept by mental health professionals providing mandated assessments are protected information and are kept separate from educational records. Therapist records are to be kept in accordance with the applicable state law(s) and professional ethics.

G. Review

The Divisional Head for this policy is the Vice President for Student Affairs and this policy shall be reviewed every five years or sooner if necessary by the following Stakeholders:

1. Dean of Students – Senior Reviewer
2. Academic Affairs Executive Team
3. Director of Counseling and Psychological Services
4. Student Judicial Services
5. Chief of Police
6. Student Government Association President
7. Staff Senate Chair
8. Faculty Senate Chair